White Paper

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Re-envisioning the Humanities PhD White Paper

The Re-envisioning the Humanities PhD Planning Grant was initiated with a full plenary session meeting on August 30, 2016. During the meeting, the sub-committees were welcomed, learned about the committee roles within the grant structure, and were given their formal charges. All leadership, staff, and committee participants met and engaged with their sub-committees. Participants worked together in sub-committee groups and reported back to the full group on their initial thoughts about timelines, activities, and methods for reaching their assigned project goals. Each sub-committee set dates for their initial committee meetings, and the grant leadership and staff set a timeframe for the first sub-committee chairs' meeting.

What Happened?

In September 2016, the grant leadership and staff worked together to define and produce resources needed by the sub-committees such as contact lists for Directors of Graduate Study and Graduate Student Services Coordinators, Graduate Certificate Programs, and Alumni Contacts. In addition they created an internal resources-sharing project site for all of the grant participants to be able to share these resource documents, project information and updates, as well as articles and news items of relevance. The grant staff set up and launched social media sites for the grant program on *Facebook* and *Twitter* as well as created a web page on the Institute for the Arts and Humanities (IAH) site for the project to disseminate calls and other project information across campus. During this period each sub-committee held their own initial committee meetings to set timelines for projects and distribute activities and functions among the committee members.

In October 2016, multiple committees made progress on their action items. The Careers sub-committee chair attended a meeting of the Graduate School's Professional Development Committee discussion of alternative careers. The Data sub-committee developed and reviewed focus group questions and began to define the appropriate populations to survey in the focus groups. Requests for focus group participation were disseminated through contact lists, the web page, and social media. The Collaboration sub-committee developed resource documents on collaboration in the Humanities including "Successful Collaborations at UNC," a report on "Barriers to Collaboration," and "Collaborative Research Materials Overview." And the Alumni / Networking Sub-committee began planning and recording its podcast series. The first sub-committee chairs' meeting was convened with the grant staff to check in on the status of projects and address any sub-committee needs from the grant staff and leadership.

In November 2016, the first two public discussions were held. The first occurred on Nov. 2, 2017. It was hosted by the Curriculum sub-committee who partnered to bring Sidonie Smith to campus to discuss her book, *A Manifesto for the Humanities: Transforming Doctoral Education in "Good Enough" Times*. This event was well attended, particularly by graduate students and was live-tweeted by several grant participants. The following day, Nov. 3, 2017, Sidonie Smith participated in a working lunch with many of the "Re-envisioning the Humanities PhD" sub-committee members to talk specifically about how her research and our project work intersected. The lunch was successful, and many important topics were discussed, in particular mythologies around non-traditional doctoral training. The second public discussion occurred on Nov. 9, 2017. This discussion was hosted by the Collaboration sub-committee, who framed their event as a Collaborative Research Forum open to graduate students across the disciplines. The forum was successful and provided good information from the students about their desires to do collaborative research and what they experienced as benefits and barriers to such work.

In December 2016, work was limited due to end of the semester and the long holiday break. However, important work to move additional projects forward occurred. The Data sub-committee

and their partners at the Odum Institute completed their focus groups and began to review the focus group data. Also in December the Curriculum sub-committee developed their CFP for a faculty curriculum development grant and a call for participation in a graduate student working group working on an alternative dissertation white paper.

January 2017 was a busy month for the project as organization for the new semester and the last half of the grant projects occurred. The grant staff and Curriculum sub-committee disseminated the CFP for faculty curriculum development grants and the call for participation for the graduate student working group on the alternative dissertation white paper. The second plenary session including all grant participants was held and focused on a review of projects complete to date, adjustments to outcome, and updates to timelines. The grant staff developed a comprehensive list of graduate certificate programs, and the Chair of the Alumni / Networking sub-committee worked with a faculty committee member to begin discussions about partnering with specific certificate programs to address Humanities doctoral training beyond the professoriate. The Careers sub-committee developed a survey instrument to complete a Case Study for English / Comp Lit Department on alt-ac professionalization. The second sub-committee Chairs' meeting was held in preparation for feedback needed by the grant leadership as they attended the Project Directors' meeting in Washington DC.

February 2017 was focused primarily on gathering and disseminating data from various projects. The Careers sub-committee forwarded the survey instrument to the English and Comparative Literature Department to further their case study survey. And the Data sub-committee distributed the summary information or condensed focus group reports to all grant participants (staff and sub-committee members) for the third and final grant plenary session on February 23, 2017. This final plenary session was convened to review focus group data and prepare for the final aspects of the grant projects.

In March 2017 the final public discussion, the Alumni Networking Conference, was held on March 24, 2017. The program included three panels and a Job Market Workshop. The first panel was on the Bland Fellowship featuring two graduate student fellows who discussed the value of the program's required internships as an alternate professionalization pathway. The second panel, the keynote session, was given by Sean Knierim a UNC-CH PhD alum who has developed his own business. During lunch there was a series of table topics hosted by different campus resources for graduate students. The Job Market Workshop was given by a graduate student member of the grant committees who worked in UNC's Career Services office to develop graduate student focused career support programs. The workshop focused on converting academic curricula vitae to non-academic resumes and navigating the non-academic job market. The final panel was given by the Career sub-committee around their findings on the English and Comparative Literature Case Study.

In April 2017 most sub-committees had completed their work and had final meetings. The Curriculum sub-committee was active in completing its projects. The sub-committee convened the graduate student working group and developed the white paper, "Rethinking the Traditional Dissertation." They also reviewed and selected a faculty curriculum development grant awardee in the History Department for the project focused on creating a "Technology Bootcamp & Digital Literacy." The Data sub-committee began talks with the Graduate School about combining their survey with an upcoming 2018 campus-wide graduate student survey.

In May and June 2017, the primary work on the grant has been to collate reporting materials for the grant closure and summarizing information to prepare for an implementation grant application. One main sub-committee project that was completed was by the Careers sub-committee who identified and funded three graduate students to attend the "Beyond the Professoriate" virtual conference. The grant staff also worked on and completed a newly identified goal – to develop a

next generation humanities doctoral training "mini" library bibliography for DGSs. Physical copies of selected texts in the "mini" libraries will be distributed to all Directors of Graduate Studies in the thirteen humanities departments. The last sub-committee Chairs' meeting was held to debrief the leadership on all aspects of the grant projects, activities, and to review chairs' reports and discussion of primary framework for implementation grant application. And the grant staff has begun the grant summary reporting, the collection and packaging of materials, the development of a stand-alone website, and the preparations for next phase of applying for the NEH Implementation grant. See Appendix for full list of participants and monthly timeline of activities and outcomes.

What Worked and What Didn't?

For the "Re-envisioning the Humanities PhD" planning grant, our public discussion events including the focus groups, the Sidonie Smith public talk, the Collaborative Research Forum, and the Alumni Networking Conference, were very successful in engaging a variety of students, faculty and staff across campus. Each event offered insights into the many facets of the changing nature of doctoral professionalization and employment in the humanities. There were strong engagements at the public events from the participating groups but group attendance could have been greater. Overwhelmingly students suggested that more targeted events would be helpful; however, getting information out broadly on UNC-CH's campus is difficult for those not already aware that these programs and resources exist (see further details on campus decentralization below).

Among the grant participants, sub-committee members were invested in their work on the project and contributed to their committee activities and goals. The variety of teams across the sub-committees worked well together by all accounts, and more goals than originally planned were accomplished as each sub-committee reacted responsively to newly identified needs or to uncovering information or resources not previously expected prior to the start of the project. It was especially useful to have a range of voices – students, faculty, and staff – on each committee to both uncover and address mythologies, barriers, and opportunities. One difficulty that the sub-committees experienced was coordinating multiple schedules.

The sub-committees and the grant team successfully gathered and compiled various sets of data and resources in order to begin to define the existing needs, solutions, and interests as well as to begin to sketch solutions to known problems and barriers and problems identified during the grant period. The grant activities are discussed in the narrative above in detail, the outcomes or products of the grant work - particularly materials generated - are included in the table below:

Item	Type of Resource	Sub-Committee
All DGSs & Student Services Contacts List	Document / Database	Grants Staff
Alumni Contacts List	Document / Database	Alumni / Networking
Conference Program & Panel Sessions	Conference	Alumni / Networking
Alumni Podcast Series	Media Resources	Alumni / Networking
Successful Collaborations at UNC-CH	Document	Collaboration
Collaborative Research Materials Overview	Literature Review and Annotated Bibliography	Collaboration
Item	Type of Resource	Sub-Committee

Barriers to Collaboration	Document	Collaboration
"Mini" Library Bibliography for Next Gen Doctoral Training	Document	Grant Staff
Focus Group Questionnaire	Evaluation Tool	Data
Graduate Student Survey Questions	Evaluation Tool	Data
Focus Group Summary Results	Report	Data
Departmental Case Study	Report (Survey based)	Careers
"Rethinking the Traditional Dissertation"	White Paper	Curriculum
Curriculum Development Grant Call	CFP	Curriculum
Social Media Sites (Facebook & Twitter)	Communications Resources	Grant Staff
IAH Page & Stand-alone website	Communications and Resource Repository	Grant Staff
Meeting Reports, Interim Reports, and Final Reporting	Grant Documents	Grant Staff /Sub-committee Chairs

Table 1: Resources and Materials Generated as Outcomes of the Grant

Things that posed problems for the grant participants also seemed to correspond to generalized thematic issues on the UNC-CH campus. Feedback from sub-committees as well as event participants suggests a primary difficulty at UNC Chapel Hill is the highly-decentralized nature of the campus. Often programs, grants, opportunities and information or resources exist but students, faculty, and staff not intimately acquainted with those particular programs are often unaware they exist or are available. This played out often in the grant with sub-committees and grant staff having difficulty disseminating information to various constituencies. Moreover, the grant team had to rely on the good will of key players, such as Directors of Graduate Studies, in the various departments to forward information to student list servers or email lists in a timely manner. A primary difficulty with this framework is the dependence on a particular faculty member's orientation to the discussion around alt-ac, post-ac, or non-traditional doctoral training information sent out about grant projects or other opportunities may not be deemed relevant and so may remain unseen by particular graduate populations. For our campus a more comprehensive communications plan and marketing strategy for the project would have been helpful. Informational infrastructures need to be built out, but this takes more than simple technological solutions: dedicated staff is needed to regularly search for, parse, collate, and disseminate information and update resource sites and documents.

This first problem leads to a second primary issue, which was identified as a theme throughout the grant work but was most clear in the departmental case study done by the Careers sub-committee: a culture of secrecy around alternative or non-traditional pathways for doctoral training and employment. Again, differential buy in from faculty and students around the value and importance of alternative professionalization methods in the current educational and employment environment guides how opportunities and information are disseminated. Further, such information is deployed in relatively hidden ways, such as one-on-one meetings late in graduate student careers instead of in unified ways early on when students have the most flexibility to make choices for their futures.

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A major barrier to changes identified by the grant participants and taken to the Project Directors' meeting in Washington DC is the sheer scale of the changes and information needing to be addressed within the scope of next generation doctoral training. At UNC-CH alone there are thirteen departments representing at least as many disciplinary areas nationally that all have differential norms and levels of urgency around job placement as well as different orientations toward non-traditional training, projects, and employment. Getting buy-in from faculty, students, and staff outside the project or areas already committed to change poses a particular difficulty. What is very clear is that there is no one size fits all solution and that cultural changes at multiple levels – departments, universities, national/international disciplinary bodies, employers (academic and non-academic) – must all be engaged in moving forward together during the processes of change that is now occurring. For future projects the grant leadership and sub-committee chairs believe a solution must somehow link the various departments together in a commitment to building a culture of multi-modal doctoral training. This will help address the tensions between disciplinary and departmental cultures on campus. However, it is also essential that the University and other universities engaged in these programs begin to work toward making commitments to valuing non-traditional training at the same level that they value traditional training through recruiting, hiring and tenure promotion practices. This would help change cultures broadly at the national and global disciplinary levels as well as reinforce for faculty and students alike that they will not be punished for driving change in humanities doctoral training.

What Does it All Mean?

In reflecting on what we have learned in talking about the current state of humanities PhD training at UNC Chapel Hill and the changes that many stakeholders desire to see in the humanities PhD (from coursework to career training), several inter-related areas of concern emerge. First and foremost is the issue of careers: what careers are available to humanities PhDs outside of research and/or teaching in a four-year institution. Secondary to the concern of careers—a concern shared by current PhD humanities students, humanities PhD alumni, humanities faculty, and various university administrators—is the preparation that humanities PhD students are receiving (or not receiving as the case may be) to find job opportunities outside of tenure track positions in academia. In other words: how can students be prepared for career opportunities when their department's course curriculum and PhD requirements focus on training them to be scholars in their given disciplines rather than giving them a variety of skills that can translate outside of a research/teaching position in academia? Faculty advisors, even those sympathetic and desiring to help their students, feel ill equipped to give guidance since their knowledge derives from their particular area of scholarly expertise and not job placement outside of tenure ladder positions like their own. Other faculty express ambivalence over the messaging that will be sent in discussing alternative career paths outside of academia. What seems clear from the various lectures, public meetings, small working groups, focus groups, survey results, and one-on-one conversations that many of us have had with different constituents involved in humanities PhD work is a recognition that something should change but no clear path or agreement on (a) what specific form that change should take (b) how change should be implemented (c) when that change should or will happen.

So to quote from an iconic (if not the iconic) Kevin Costner film: if you build it, they will come. We believe that the various data that we have collected from "Re-envisioning the Humanities PhD" makes clear that the administration within the College of Arts and Sciences of UNC Chapel Hill and the leadership within the graduate school of UNC Chapel Hill should (a) create specific initiatives that the 13 humanities PhD departments will (b) be required to participate in (c)

immediately – or as immediately as practicable since what ultimately needs to happen is a change in culture, which we recognize will require time. But we believe a change in culture, one that must necessarily occur at the department level, will be aided by a two-prong approach: pressure from the top and from the bottom.

In terms of pressure from the top, having the Dean of the Graduate School and the Senior Associate Dean for the Humanities within the College of Arts and Sciences at UNC Chapel Hill affirm the need for departments to change their curriculum and incorporate career training and guidance to their PhD students is definitely necessary. These can come in many forms: rewarding departments that make curricular changes, creating financial incentives for departments in changing their graduate curriculum in the form of additional graduate funding or even the support of new faculty lines. Final decisions about the best methods of incentivizing departments will be determined by the administration using the data we have gathered in the past year.

In terms of pressure from the bottom, having graduate students continue to ask for career guidance from their advisors, department leadership, and career services is paramount. Though some students have reported feeling uncertain, anxious, and fearful about initiating the conversation about alternative career paths with faculty members, we believe that students should continue to ask for more guidance in finding opportunities for careers outside of academia and for talking with PhD alumni who are working in non-tenure ladder or fixed term positions within academia. Students should empower themselves by speaking with other graduate students, within and without their departments, and students should find as many avenues for exploring how the knowledge and skills they gain through their PhD work can translate outside of an R1 environment.

"Re-Envisioning the Humanities PhD" has been an eye-opening look into the very complicated machinery of PhD humanities work: the different ways that students and faculty are siloed within their department and disciplines; the differing levels of support that faculty directors provide PhD students who are looking outside of the traditional scholarly marketplace or who do not want to continue applying for academic jobs and being rejected cycle-to-cycle; the different ideas about what needs to change and where that change needs to happen to make the humanities PhD more vibrant, pragmatic, and achievable for students who face uncertain futures after their dissertation defenses. From the various conversations, public, private, on-line, that have happened over the course of the 2016-17 academic year, what seems most clear is that there is good will toward PhD students: faculty and administrators want humanities PhD students to succeed. What is less clear is how to make that change happen and who should bear the burden of providing information and training to humanities PhDs. As noted above, the biggest take-away we can reflect on about what lessons we have learned and what this all means (this, being the ability to make changes to humanities PhD programs) is that there is a desire for change and a willingness to make that change happen: what we really need is the leadership to enact that change in specific forms. But we do believe that change is necessary—a change in culture, a change to course requirements, a change in dissertation requirements (or at the very least a flexibility within the dissertation format), and a change in career guidance—and that UNC Chapel Hill has the capacity to enact this change.

What's Next?

Our plans to continue the work of this grant currently extend into late 2018 – early 2019. The "Re-envisioning the Humanities PhD" planning grant was structured in many ways as an early implementation grant to help ensure the sustainability of proposed changes going forward after the planning grant period. Initial follow up activities include the continued development of the stand-

alone website for the project at http://reenvisionphd.web.unc.edu. This website will house the resources and materials developed in the course of the project for all constituencies. The first phase of the website development will be completed by June 30, 2017. Any formal launch of the website will need to be planned for Fall 2017 for highest impact with new and returning students. Then during the fall semester 2017 we will begin distributing physical "mini" libraries on next generation humanities doctoral training to all Directors of Graduate Studies in the 13 humanities disciplines at UNC-CH. We will also continue the dissemination of the Re-envisioning the humanities PhD. Pod Cast series (2 episodes) in the Fall 2017 semester. Fall 2017 will also be the semester that the implementation grant application package will be written pending the announcement of a call for proposals from the NEH. In the spring of 2018 (per the Graduate School's timeline), the survey questions developed by the Data sub-committee will be deployed in the graduate school survey in order to reach the broadest populations possible. Survey data analysis, report generation, and further planning will thus continue into 2018 and likely 2019 as well. Pending the completion of the curriculum development grant by the History Department team, new curriculum should be available no later than late 2018. Both the survey and new curriculum will provide opportunities to continue the conversation in a parallel track to any Next Gen implementation grant.

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Appendix A: Grant Participants by Sub-Committee

Career Sub-committee:
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Data Sub-committee:
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Peter Mucha, PhD (Mathematics, Chair, Dept. of Applied Physical Sciences) – mucha@unc.edu**

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Appendix B: Monthly Timeline of Project (Activities and Outcomes):

Month	Project Activity or Outcome Description
August 2016	Opening Plenary Session – sub-committees receive charge and brainstorm projects
September 2016	1) Initial sub-committee meetings to plan project timelines and activities 2) Grant staff develop comprehensive contact list of Directors of Graduate Study and Graduate Student Services Staff for the dissemination of project information 3) Alumni / Networking sub-committee develops comprehensive list of alumni contacts
October 2016	1) Careers sub-committee Attends meeting of Graduate School's Professional Development Committee discussion of alternative careers 2) Data sub-committee development and review of focus group questions and definition of focus group populations 3) Requests for focus group participation disseminated 4) Collaboration sub-committee develops resource documents "Successful Collaborations at UNC," and "Collaborative Research Materials Overview" 5) Alumni / Networking sub-committee begins planning and recording podcast series
November 2016	1) Nov. 2, 2017 Curriculum sub-committee Public Discussion – Sidonie Smith brought to campus to discuss her book, *A Manifesto for the Humanities: Transforming Doctoral Education in "Good Enough" Times*. 2) Nov. 3, 2017 Working lunch with Sidonie Smith and Re-envisioning the Humanities PhD sub-committee members 3) Nov. 9, 2017 Collaboration sub-committee public discussion – Collaborative Research Forum held with graduate students across the disciplines
December 2016	1) Data Sub-committee partners at the Odum Institute begin review of focus group data 2) Curriculum sub-committee develops CFP for faculty curriculum development grants and call for participation for graduate student working group on alternative dissertation white paper

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Month	Project Activity or Outcome Description
January 2017	1) Disseminate CFP for faculty curriculum development grants and call for participation for graduate student working group on alternative dissertation white paper 2) Second Plenary Session – review projects complete to date, adjust outcomes and update timelines 3) Grant staff develops comprehensive list of graduate certificate programs and begins discussion of partnering with specific certificate programs to address humanities doctoral training beyond the professoriate 4) Careers Sub-committee - develop survey instrument for English / Comp Lit Departmental Case Study 5) Grant Staff – convene sub-committee Chairs' meeting 6) Grant Staff – grant leadership attends the Project Directors' meeting in Washington DC
February 2017	1) Careers sub-committee – dissemination of case study survey to English / Comp Lit department 2) Data sub-committee – distribute condensed focus group reports to all grant participants (staff and sub-committee members) 3) 2/23/ 2017 Third Plenary session to review focus group data and prepare for the final aspects of the grant projects.
March 2017	1) Alumni / Networking sub-committee Public Discussion – Alumni Networking Conference (March 24, 2017)
April 2017	1) Curriculum sub-Committee convenes graduate student working group and develops white paper, "Rethinking the Traditional Dissertation" 2) Curriculum sub-Committee reviews and selects faculty curriculum development grant awardee: project from the History Department "Technology Bootcamp & Digital Literacy"
May – June 2017	1) Careers sub-committee – Fund 3 students to attend the "Beyond the Professoriate" virtual conference 2) Grant Staff – development of next generation humanities doctoral training "mini" library bibliography for DGSs 3) Grant staff – last sub-committee Chairs' meeting to debrief on the grant projects and review chairs' reports and discussion of primary framework for implementation grant application 4) Grant staff – summary reporting, collection and packaging of materials, development of website, and preparation for next phase of development.